



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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## *A Michigan original* **Governor John Engler's love of family, state embodied in Capitol portrait unveiled today**

A portrait of former Gov. John Engler, graced with subtle artistic elements highlighting his achievements and offering insights about the man, was unveiled today in its honored Capitol setting during a public ceremony.

The portrait of Michigan's 46<sup>th</sup> governor now hangs in the Capitol Rotunda's Gallery of Governors, joining the likenesses of 13 previous chief executives. The portrait, created by internationally renowned artist Dr. Nelson Shanks, is a privately funded project that continues the tradition of paying lasting tribute to the legacies of Michigan governors.

"This portrait summarizes an amazing time in Michigan's history," said Engler, who stood alongside of his wife Michelle and their daughters Hannah, Margaret and Madeleine. "Our state surged forward on many fronts and was a national model for its creative solutions. That success would not have been possible without the courage of men and women on both sides of the aisle. While I stand in awe of Dr. Shanks' artistry, I would consider it to be the supreme honor if his work serves as a window to Michigan's noble spirit, boundless potential and eternal greatness. For Michigan's sake, we must remember the past but look to the future.

"I am deeply touched by this tribute. It appropriately recognizes the support of

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my wonderful family, who continues to sustain and inspire me. I also must thank every member of the portrait committee their unselfish contributions that made this day possible.”

Former first lady Michelle Engler spoke of the event’s importance to the entire family.

“It’s a privilege to be a part of Michigan’s history,” Mrs. Engler said. “This is a special day that our family will always remember. To be commemorated with this masterpiece, in this very building that has meant so much to John, is very touching. This splendid portrait, like John himself, is a Michigan original. Dr. Shank’s work is truly a tribute for the ages.”

The portrait took more than 400 hours to create and is infused with symbols of Gov. Engler as a man and a leader. The carefully selected volumes of books pictured underscore his passion for reading. The background bust of Abraham Lincoln celebrates his Republican Party leadership and fierce belief in a vibrant democracy. His hand holds a blueprint that symbolizes his leadership in the Capitol restoration project, one of Engler’s personal highlights in his 32-year career in public service.

Engler’s tenure was from 1991 to 2003, making him Michigan’s second longest-serving governor. Hallmarks of the Engler administration include 32 tax cuts, sweeping education reforms and record-low statewide unemployment. The Isabella County native is the son of Agnes and the late Matt Engler, a Beal City farmer and cattleman.

The artist, Dr. Shanks, has painted luminaries such as Pope John Paul II, Lady Margaret Thatcher, former presidents Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, tenor Luciano Pavarotti and Princess Diana of Wales.

For a link to the portrait and to learn more about Michigan’s rich history and the governors who have served, visit [www.michigan.gov/hal](http://www.michigan.gov/hal).

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